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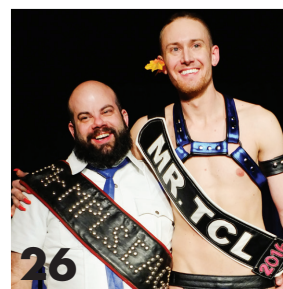
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ON THE COVER

Summer Home & Garden topics bring about decor, nature, renovation, and art. Pictured here are Frank Fitzgerald and John Evans on the porch of their updated home. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

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Their Time to Glow

I was recently asked to speak at a meeting of a gay-straight alliance at Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet School in St. Paul. GSAs play such an integral role in providing safe spaces for support and exchanges of information for students and I was thrilled that I was asked. What threw me off a little was that it was my nephew who was asking and he's in 7th grade. He's a proud ally who's proud to have an aunt in this role for this community and I jumped at the chance to meet his group. Though my school didn't have one out in the cornfield between Dassel and Cokato just west of the Twin Cities, I joined a GSA the moment I got to college. But middle schoolers? With a GSA? This is a brave new world and I am so happy to be a part of it.

The name of their group is GLOW, "Gay, Lesbian or Whatever." And I love them for that openness and casual flair. Instead of a gay-straight alliance, they refer to it as a "gender sexuality alliance," which is more inclusive. Each session begins with the students bringing up a "Big Gay Moment" that they may have experienced in the past week. That day, they ranged from someone seeing a bumper sticker about love, to a girl's sister getting "gay engaged," to another girl coming out to her mother. I fought to maintain composure as this young woman said that her coming out to her mother was a little deflated because her mother already knew since she'd seen the daughter fill out a form the week before at the doctor's office that asked for her to specify her sexuality. Everyone was so happy for her and I wanted to give her a huge hug and maybe have a parade in the hallway, but I kept it together and was in silent awe of this whole sharing session, these kids, their stories, and their lives.

We only had a short amount of time to talk, so I tried to race through things like my background, what my education and preparation has been for this job, and the history of Lavender Media, which is a daunting task that's pretty high-context. Looking around the group of about 35 kids all eating their lunches during this time of voluntary togetherness over their lunch period, I could see that I probably didn't need to fill in too many gaps about what definitions are, as I could guess that much of the community was represented, especially since this particular sub-community was gay, lesbian, or whatever. They were questioning and they were curious. So I tried to give half the time we had to questions that had both

been written the week before as well as had popped into their minds as I was talking and showing them some magazines. And, let me tell you, the question and answer period is where I was able to see their minds working and processing and opening and moving us all forward, the shifts seemed seismic to me at the time. Our future. Right there.


What'd they want to know? A lot. But the most commonly asked question was whether or not Lavender gets "a lot of hate." Do people send in hate mail? Do they leave nasty comments? Are we the recipients of disapproval? I was relieved to truthfully report that no, we don't get any hate. If it's an indication that things do "get better," I'm happy to give them that glimpse into our reality. And, especially for those who find this group to provide "lots of security" as "one of the only places that I can really be myself" as mentioned on a comment card from a student, I want to assure them that there are more public places out there where they are welcome and can find the same support as they get in that classroom every Thursday in St. Paul.

I know that this group is one of many that exists in the Twin Cities and that fact makes me extremely happy. When I asked about how it was formed, it's apparently a process that depends on how open the specific schools may be to taking a bit of a risk in allowing such a group to exist, considering that parents may or may not be supportive of their children having access to such information or content. So, what I'll do in the upcoming Pride Issue is include a piece on how students and parents can work with teachers, staff, and schools to form a gay-straight alliance. Seeing how hungry these kids were for knowledge and understanding that they give up their lunchtime to be there for themselves and each other gives me great hope that this old-fashioned consciousness-raising is raising a new generation that finds tolerance as native to their beings as all this technology that they seem to inherently know and understand. We need to make more spaces and more lunch hours and more resources available in schools. Now.

Thank you, members of GLOW, for inviting me in and teaching me so much. I am proud to now know you.

With you, with them, with thanks,

Andy ■



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In The Long Run

Too seldom do we encounter an act of supreme grace and aptness. One such occasion occurred April 19, when Atsede Baysa, the first woman to cross the Boston Marathon 2016 finish line, gave her trophy to Bobbi Gibb, who 50 years ago to the day was the first woman ever to (unofficially) compete in the event.

Gibb accepted the trophy on one condition; that in a year she return it to Baysa in her native Ethiopia. A gracious gift under any circumstance, but all the more poignant considering the circumstances of Gibbs's 1966 performance.

Gibb had trained for two years, often running 40 miles a day in nurse's shoes (there was no market for women's sports gear), only to be told when attempting to register that "women were not physiologically capable of running marathon distances," and that sanctioned AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) rules allowed women only mile-and-a-half events.

Gibb realized then just how important her goal was. Wearing a blue hoodie, her brother's shorts, and boy's sneakers, she was dropped off in Hopkinton and hid in the forsythia bushes, waiting until about half the pack (of 540) had passed before jumping in. At first, she kept on

her hoodie, fearing she would be arrested if she were discovered. As her presence became known, runners and bystanders alike were supportive. Crossing the finish line at 3:21:40, ahead of about two-thirds of the field, she found Massachusetts governor John Volpe waiting to shake her hand.

Now 73, Gibb says, "I wanted to show that men and women could do things together and end this war between the sexes...that we can all be individuals and try what we love. [...] We don't have to be restricted by these stereotypical boxes."

From a time when women's athletic shoes weren't even manufactured to a time when women from the United States — and Ethiopia — comprise 12,600 entrants of a 27,491 field, women have shown their mettle. Men's winning times, 2:17:11 in 1966 and 2:12:45 today have not changed as dramatically as the women's. Properly equipped and trained, Atsede Baysa, recently turned 29 and a singer by trade, came from behind to a blistering 2:29:45 win.

A beautiful gesture from Baysa honored Gibb's feat, and demonstrated again the power of women. Of anyone finally allowed in. ■

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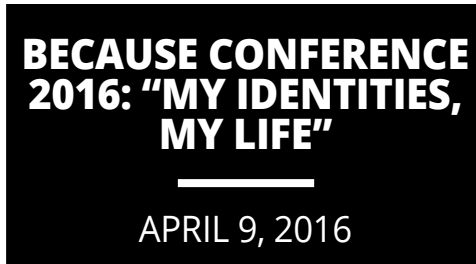
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The 1992 movie comes to the stage by way of Minneapolis Musical Theatre. Vocal director and MMT Artistic Director Christian Unser shares, “The music in *Leap of Faith* is all original, composed by Alan Menken of *Aladdin* and *Little Shop of Horrors* fame, just to name a few. As for the style, it’s a mix of rock, gospel, and current musical theater. While there are scripted scenes throughout the show, the music often winds its way in and out so there are whole sections that are nearly completely sung through. It truly is the kind of music you might hear inside a modern tent revival.” Featuring the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir.

Q-STAGE

Through May 22
Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis
612-871-4444
www.intermediaarts.org

20% Theatre Company presents new work by various queer

artists, featuring Hector Chavarria, A.P. Looze, Gender Tender, Will Courtney, and JamieAnn Meyers. Chavarria has been steadily gaining a following with his stage work and his *Big Gay Mexican Show* is eagerly awaited.

Chavarria shares, “I created my *Big Gay Mexican Show* persona about two years ago. He is a happy-go-lucky character that wants to fill the world with positivity. There is so much hatred encouraged in today’s social media. Fat-shaming articles, homophobic posts, and racist jokes flood my social media feeds every day and it is a constant reminder that this is the type of world we live in. Most of my life I have struggled with maintaining a high self-esteem because most of my life I was told and being educated to be someone I wasn’t. My goal with my art is to inspire positive self image. I want to help those in need of acceptance by presenting my stories in the hope that they can relate and know that they are not alone. *The Big Gay Mexican* is a friend to all. He finds the beauty in everyone he sees.”

SING ME, NAKED

May 17-18
Open Eye Theater
506 E. 24th St., Minneapolis
www.singmenaked.com

Three substantive female artists (Emily Lau, Lizz Windnagel, and Chienhwe Carol) are featured as part of Open Eye’s May music series. Windnagel points out that “as an American society, we are constantly barraged by images of scantily clad, thin, white models. But rarely do we see naked bodies in the media or entertainment that aren’t Photoshopped or completely controlled by our society’s standards. As female artists, we are taking on the task of challenging this issue and many more that surround women’s bodies and the history of why they are controlled in this way. As singers and dancers, who use our bodies as our instruments, we

are held to the same standard of perfectionism as well, and these expectations go deeper than the lines on our skin or the timbre of our voice. To be naked on stage can be truly vulnerable and uncomfortable, but we feel that this can lead to greater courage and compassion. This piece will delve into these themes while also celebrating the luscious nature of our bodies and voices.”

VENUS NEFANDA & IN BETWEEN

May 20-22
Dreamland Arts
677 Hamline Ave. N., St. Paul
651-645-5506
www.dreamlandarts.com

Suzu Messerole took her place in Minnesota queer theater history long ago for her administrative smarts and directorial brilliance for Outward Spiral Theatre Company. She resurges now and then, though not often enough. Happily, you can catch her most recent work in what you can bet will be a fascinating piece.

Messerole traveled to Scotland to create *Venus Nefanda*, based on transcripts of the 1810 case, “Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon.” Two governesses were accused of having sex together, hence, the term *venus nefanda*. Their girls’ boarding school was subsequently closed. Their accuser was a young mixed-race girl with an influential grandmother. You are right to suspect it influenced Lillian Hellman’s landmark Americanized play, *The Children’s Hour*, but this new script is drawn heavily from the actual transcripts and is co-acted by Messerole and her gifted performance partner from years past, Aamera Siddiqui. Directed by Anton Jones.

Venus Nefanda plays on a double bill with *In Between*, a story of cultural and language shifts in a woman’s life. Eliza Rasheed is the writer/performer. Directed by Leah Nelson.

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SONS OF THE PROPHET

May 20–June 5

Park Square Theatre

Proscenium Stage, 20 W. 7th Place, St. Paul

651-291-7005

www.parksquaretheatre.org

Jef Hal-Flavin was a driving force behind probably the best queer theater troupe in Minnesota history, Outward Spiral, founded in the 1990s. He also directed perhaps the best *A Midsummer Night's Dream* I've ever seen. Like his latest project, that Shakespeare production was for Park Square. He shares about this piece: "The gay dynamic in *Sons of the Prophet* is what I've been waiting for. In this deftly written play by Stephen Karam, the two gay characters' sexuality is one of many factors in the dramatic action, but not the most important one. To me, this signals an important shift away from the kinds of plays I was directing in the 1990s, which were *about* being gay and the ripple effects of identity."

Hal-Flavin continues, "The play is a lot of things, but it's essentially a comedy about suffering, in the context of a second generation immigrant family grieving a loss. Both the older brother approaching 30, named Joseph (Sasha Andreev), and his younger 18-year-old brother, named Charles (Maxwell Collyard), are gay, and out of the closet. The semi-closeted man, a newscaster named Timothy (Dave Gangler), isn't struggling with identity issues, only professional ones."

In addition, he adds, "Just like non-gay families, the friction is largely generational. The two brothers have to navigate a worldview that is dying out. Their aging, religious uncle makes them wince with words like 'faggy,' 'Oriental,' and 'mulatto,' and they have to cope like the rest of us: with appropriate amounts of outrage and sarcasm. Karam has drawn intricate characters with fine nuance, and I am thrilled to be working on a play where being gay is just part of life. Plus it's damn funny."

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

May 20–June 6

Savage Umbrella's SPACE

558 Vandalia St., Ste. 306, St. Paul

800-838-3006

www.brownpapertickets.com*The Glass Menagerie*. Photo courtesy of Lanny Langston*Sons of the Prophet*. Photo by Petronella J Ytsma

Master gay playwright Tennessee Williams is best remembered by millions for his first Broadway hit in 1945–46, *The Glass Menagerie*. Director of the Theatre Coup d'Etat revival, Lanny Langston, feels that the play's "universal themes of familial love, survival, disappointment, and regret become much more powerful to a modern audience as we watch the Wingfield family fight ferociously to escape their own reality: the despair of the Great Depression. Ultimately, Tom is forced to decide between supporting his mother and sister or breaking free of the bonds created by society and familial obligation to pursue his passion. Although considered a tragedy, *The Glass Menagerie* is one of the most hopeful plays in American history, a beautiful portrait of a family going to extraordinary lengths to protect their own."

In preparing for his lead performance as Tom, James Napoleon Stone has drawn from Williams' famous essay, *The Catastrophe of Success*, wherein the very idea of success as measured in our materialistic society is regarded essentially

as a myth. Stone muses that he is "struggling to succeed, and only after 'success,' did he realize how much energy the struggle itself truly took. This vital energy, along with the pursuit of Tom's objective, is something I will work to cultivate with the character."

THE CHRISTIANS

May 20–June 11

Mixed Blood Theatre

1401 S. 4th St., Minneapolis

612-375-0300

www.walkingshadowcompany.org

Religion is often associated with inflexibility, but Walking Shadow Theatre may counter that with their production of *The Christians* by Lucas Hnath. Director Amy Rummenie relates that "Pastor Paul, played by Andrew Erskine Wheeler, takes stock of the exponential growth of his once-small church and the words of a missionary who spoke at a recent conference and realizes he disagrees with a core belief of his faith. So he announces a drastic shift to the community's beliefs, starting a domino effect of changes to his church, community, marriage, and soul." ■



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Celebrity Summit cruise ship; kale salad from the main dining room aboard the Celebrity Summit.



Eat the Ship

To say I love cruising as much as I love eating is probably stretching the truth a bit, but I definitely love eating on a cruise ship as much as anywhere else. If not more so. Shocking? Maybe to someone who has never dined à la mer. Heck, before my own maiden voyage three years ago, I would've scoffed at the idea. Isn't cruise food just one big all-you-can-eat buffet, filled with cheap gut-busting carbs and mediocre main dishes? Four cruises later and I can assure you, nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, every major cruise line does offer an all-you-can-eat buffet and the quality, like all of the food onboard, varies from line to line, sometimes even ship to ship. However, the buffet is by no means your only option. Nor should it be. In fact, I would generally recommend you avoid it most days in favor of the main dining room. More on why in a bit. Regardless, there will be times you simply want a quick bite to eat before heading out on a snorkeling excursion or lazy day at the beach and the buffet is perfectly suited for those very occasions.

Just as every major cruise line has a buffet, each also has its own main dining room. More civilized than saddling up to the buffet trough, main dining rooms typically offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And it's our favorite way to eat onboard. After all, you're paying for the meals no matter how or where you consume them. Why not enjoy the luxury of a sit down meal, served to you by overly attentive wait staff whose singular aim is to make your voyage as memorable as possible.

They know your name. What entrée you love. What ingredient you hate. Mention an allergy or aversion and it'll never show up on your plate. Can't get enough calamari and it'll be on your table every night. And they never stop bringing bread baskets.

The variety often borders on the absurd with food and drink changing daily. If nothing strikes your fancy, never fear. There is usually a select group of classic entrées and items that stay on the menu throughout the entire voyage. And don't let the small portions fool you. Order as

many appetizers and entrées as you want. Like something? Great. Have another. Hate it? Send it back. It's your fun-filled throw-caution-to-the-wind vacation. Live a little. Or a lot!

If the main dining room has lost its luster or you simply want to try something new, have a look around. Most ships offer a number of alternative dining options, some with an additional fee. My partner and I have had lifealtering steaks on board that would rival many restaurants in town for as little \$35.

My best dining advice is do your homework before and during your cruise. Prior to departure, peruse the particular cruise line's website for all your dining options and an explanation of what's included and what might cost extra. Knowledge is power. You're paying for it, get the most for your money.

Once on board, have a look around. Where are the dining rooms, specialty restaurants, and snack bars? Happening upon the fish and chips stand the last day of the cruise would be a real tragedy. Each day you'll receive a schedule of food service times along with the activities and events. Read through everything. There's nothing worse than arriving back from a long, arduous day of cave tubing to find that lunch ended 20 minutes ago. Hangry never needs to happen on a cruise.

Room service is another common option on most major lines. Read the fine print, though, to make sure late night calls don't come with an added fee. We typically order room service for breakfast on mornings where we plan to get off the ship early. At the very least, have coffee delivered in the morning to put a little pep in your step as you get ready for another day in paradise.

Speaking of drinks, let's not speak of drinks. There's much to say on the matter. Too much, in fact, for me to cover here. And the discussion often requires math. I hate math. My best advice is to head to my singular favorite online cruise authority: cruisecritic.com. There you will find

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Sushi lollipops at Qsine, one of the specialty restaurants aboard the Celebrity Summit.

an endless supply of information, advice, and reviews about food, drinks, and, of course, every other possible cruise related topic.

As I mentioned earlier, the quality of your dining experience varies by cruise line. My partner and I have now sailed on three different lines: Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Celebrity. We loved each for different reasons. Fun is definitely the keyword on Carnival, food and otherwise. Nothing too fancy, you can always count on a helping of comfort food on Carnival. If there's a Guy's (Fieri) Burger Joint on your ship, congratulations. You just won. Also, molten lava cake. Royal Caribbean's attention to detail in the dining room was definitely on point. Above average, but not our overall favorite.

That honor goes to Celebrity. In April, we sailed on the Celebrity Summit out of San Juan. For seven days we found ourselves mouthing phrases like, "OMG can you believe this food?" "Isn't this the best food we've had yet?" "Did you know they have



an eggs benedict bar at the buffet?" "This is the best lobster I've ever had. ANYWHERE!" I can only imagine the eyerolling at neighboring tables.

It's clear that Celebrity has made great food a priority. Remember how I said we generally avoid the buffet in favor of the main dining room? On the Summit we often found the food on the buffet as good as the main dining room. This is not typical. And a totally delightful surprise. We usually book a cruise for the itinerary, not the food, but let me tell you. If there's an itinerary we want and multiple cruise lines offer it, we'd pick Celebrity every time.

If you've never cruised before and you love food, you're missing out. We often come back from our trips with just as many memories of the meals we shared as the places we visited. If I were you, I'd hop on over to cruise-

critic.com right now and begin planning your first/next trip, but be careful. Like the molten lava cake on Carnival, cruises are just as addictive. Bon Voyage! ■

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Congratulations to Sir Roman (left), boy Bolt (center) and Angie (right), the new Mr. Minnesota Leather Sir, Mr. Minnesota Leatherboy and Ms Minnesota Leather Pride for 2016. All three were awarded their titles during the Minnesota Leather Pride contest weekend, April 1-3 at The Saloon. They will represent Minnesota at Great Lakes Leather Alliance weekend, October 13-16, in Indianapolis. Photo by Steve Lenius



Congratulations to Aurora Lee, who was first runner-up at the International Ms Leather contest, April 14-17, in San Jose, California. Lee competed as Great Lakes Ms Leather Pride 2015 and is also Ms Minnesota Leather Pride 2015. Photo by Steve Lenius

Web Extra: The Stories Behind their Speeches

IML first runner-up Kevin Murphy and second runner-up Brian Donner tell all



Kevin Murphy (left) and Brian Donner (right) during their recent joint interview at The Saloon in Minneapolis. Photo by Steve Lenius



Best of luck to L. Russell Waisanen (left) and Emerson Kellogg (right) as they represent Minnesota in the 2016 International Mr. Leather contest, May 27-30, in Chicago. Waisanen is Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2016 and Kellogg is Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2016. Photo by Steve Lenius

During the 2015 International Mr. Leather (IML) contest, memorable speeches were made by Kevin Murphy (Mr. Leather Ireland 2015 and IML first runner-up) and Brian Donner (Mr. Tri-State Leather 2014 and IML second runner-up). Both men were in Minneapolis recently and I had a chance to ask them a few questions. Visit www.lavendermagazine.com to read the backstories of their amazing IML speeches.

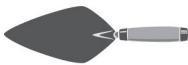


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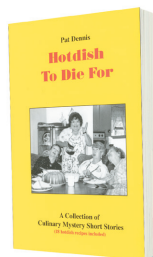
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Hotdish to Die For: A Collection of Culinary Mystery Short Stories

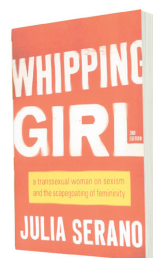
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Dennis mixes food and the funerary in this tasty collection of short stories plus an extra helping of 18 hotdish recipes for your delectation. She has an unerring ear for the subcontexts of marital discourse and the concomitant Minnesotan hotdish cuisine which, she explains is, "1) Midwestern colloquialism for a hot entrée that is similar to a French casserole except that it is often inedible; 2) the prodigal son of canned cream of mushroom soup." In her professions as a comic and author, Dennis has consumed hotdish confections statewide, and knows intimately its connections to untimely death. Savory stories include; "The Lutheran Who Lusted," "The Maltese Tater Tot," and "The Elder Hostile." See also her Betty Chance Mystery series, *Murder by Chance* and *Killed by Chance*.

Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity

Julia Serano
Seal Press
\$20



Originally published in 2007 (and reviewed in *Lavender*), *Whipping Girl* has been revised for this second edition. Then, Serano had just recently transitioned; now she is not only a decade into her new life, but the public is nearly a decade closer to having an understanding (if not universally embracing) the concept of transgender. Activist and professional biologist, Serano then and now examines how societal attitudes about women and femininity in general affect perceptions of gender, sexuality, and identity. Serano notes that originally she hoped to write the book she wished she'd had as a teen or young adult. *Whipping Girl* became that, and while still guiding young trans persons, it has illuminated the subject for others not sharing the experience. Well worth a second read.

Night Flowers: From Avant-Drag to Extreme Haute Couture

Damien Frost
Merrell
\$29.95



Dark yet celebratory, this book is the haunting result of the year Frost spent in the field capturing portraits of the myriad flowers that bloom in London's dark streets and cabaret hothouses. In his foreword, Boy George likens these images to David Bowie's "We're painting our faces and dressing in thoughts from the skies." The bouquet includes drag queens and kings, transgender and gender-queer, artists and fetish performers. Every single night for that year Frost approached his subjects on the streets and within venues such as Sink the Pink, KAOS, and Cirque le Soir. Extracting each from their temporal time and place, Frost isolated each portrait against a black background, creating a stunning focus on the face and habiliments of each individual. They'll haunt you.

Weird Fiction Review Number 6 Fall 2015

Centipede Press
\$35



In their latest collection of weird writing, including poetry, art, illustration, memoir, and essays, Centipede Press serves up, as usual, an enticing mix: an essay by Cary Loren on photographer William Mortenson, who in his varied career shot stills for Cecil B. DeMille; a long, illustrated piece by Allen R. Ruch on Mulholland Drive, and E.B. Boatner's "L.B. Cole: The Man Behind the Mask." The 375 pages are chock full of comic art illustrations, photographs, drawings, creepy flyers, and posters in Bill Wallace's spread "Spook Shows: A Tribute," that chronicles the pre-CGI gore shows that flourished in America between the 1930s and the 1970s. "The Crowd Assembled," on the jacket is a pastiche of Sgt. Pepper's cover: 73 of the best-known Giants of Weird Fiction. ■

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HOME UPDATES

NEXT LEVEL RENOVATION

BY SHANE LUECK



Photos by Greg Page

Older homes have a certain charm; some sort of character that you just don't find in newer homes. But with that charm and character comes a certain responsibility to maintain and update.

Just ask Frank Fitzgerald and John Evans. The couple's home was built in 1909 and very little had been changed over time: the woodwork had not been painted, the existing pantry and maid's staircase were intact, and the kitchen itself had had very little done to it outside of simple lower cabinets and a new sink added.


"It is a large house for two people so we really did not need additional day-to-day living space, we simply wanted the spaces we have to function better," Frank says. "For example, we did not have a vent hood over the stove and the refrigerator was in the mudroom next to the kitchen because that is where it fit best."

The couple's redesign project addressed both of those issues. The kitchen update also included adding a bit of storage space. "I also really liked that our kitchen

did not have cupboards in it; the pantry served for storage as it had when the house was built 100+ years ago," Frank says. "Hence the idea to make the addition look like a large pantry by incorporating the old pantry with a new pantry."


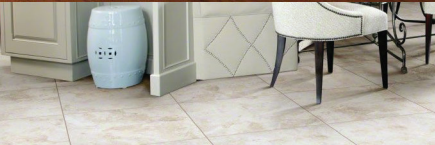
The addition of a main-level bathroom meant their home could finally suit their needs, but this redesign was several years in the making. Frank and John visited several homes in the Remodelers Showcase over the course of three years, which is where they met Nathan Shanklin with Next Level Renovation. The couple had seen a house Next Level had remodeled close to theirs with a similar vintage and style; Frank and John thought the work was thoughtful to the original character of the house and reached out.

"Frank is a landscape architect and very detail-oriented, so he had a pretty good idea of what he wanted us to implement," Nathan says. "In many cases, we work with architects and interior designers to lay out the design for our projects. In this case,



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Summer

HOME & GARDEN



Photos by Hubert Bonnet

we were able to take Frank and John's ideas and create the construction plans in-house."

After working for several months to develop the plans and details of the redesign, the project started in April with an anticipated completion in early August; however, as with any home updates, the process can take longer than expected. John says the construction was largely done by early January and now only smaller punch list items remain.

For Frank, the largest concern heading into the project initially was the amount of ambiguity in starting a redesign. "I prepared initial sketches and layouts and then we worked with Next Level to develop the plan but not every detail was figured out before we signed a contract," he says. "So, you sign a

contract for a lot of money, hoping that you are all imagining the same project. Good communication is key to a project like this."

After all is said and done, Frank and John are very pleased with the project and how well it blends with the rest of the home. "My greatest fear was the addition would diminish the quaint charm of the original pantry and look like an awkward 2015 addition ten years down the road. Fortunately it looks great and, I think, in keeping with the original house."

Blending the old with the new was the main goal of the project, Nathan says. "You can see century-old cabinets marry right into brand new constructed cabinets," he shares. "We brought in an expert in wood finishing that came up with a recipe for matching the stain and finish. We created molds of the existing woodwork and had new woodwork made to match, identical to the original woodwork of the home."

"A big trend with a lot of our clients is about 'blending,'" he continues. "So many of our clients want that seamless transition from old to new, but still incorporating modern appliances and plumbing fixtures. We even hid the wall oven in a cabinet with pocket doors to conceal it when not in use."

Beyond the woodwork, the couple tied the old with the new throughout the rest of the project as well, including finding matching hardware (which is remarkably close considering the original hardware is over 100 years old), and vintage-looking light fixtures (without falling into the trap of trendy interpretations of vintage fixtures). The project also entailed sourcing subway tile that is made the old-fashioned way, resulting in a tile that is flatter than most tile you find today and more like historic subway tile, in addition to sourcing floor tile for the



CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ➔

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Summer

HOME & GARDEN



bathroom that duplicates historic hexagonal porcelain tiles.

Completing a kitchen renovation that expanded the existing pantry and added a new bathroom and covered porch gets the couple closer to realizing the final backyard. “I am always thinking about how things look and spatially fit so the addition is part of a bigger plan that incorporates the site,” Frank says. “I have slowly been chipping away at getting the landscape where I want it to be. About 10 years ago we built a new garage which allowed us to reorient the garage, changing the access from the street to the alley. That made a big change in the landscape. I have had a master plan drawn for several years which included an addition on the house. The new covered porch, set two steps off of the ground, is very much about being ‘in’ the landscape.”

Of course, such an extensive project requires a lot from everyone involved. “We were surprised how much of our time the project took,” John says. “We assumed that when hiring a general contractor to oversee and manage the project our engagement on the project would be limited, but in the end we had to spend a lot of time watching the details, answering questions, etc. This was partly due to our interest in every small detail, and we’ve since learned is typical for most people when doing a remodeling project.”

“I learned that it is not as easy, fast, or inexpensive as it appears on the various home remodeling shows,” he continues. “We also found out that the cost of the project exceeded the amount of value added to the house. We are comfortable with this ‘partial return’ because we are happy with the improvements, it is exactly what we want, and we are planning to enjoy the new kitchen, porch, and bathroom for years to come.”

The couple is clearly thrilled with the new space, and guests have also been complimentary of the project. “The best compliment, in my opinion,” Frank says, “came from our neighbor who is an excellent woodworker who asked ‘Where do the new cabinets start?’ That was exactly what I wanted to hear! Another sign of success was at a dinner party we hosted for friends. A typical dinner party prior to the addition started in the kitchen with drinks and conversation until we had to shoo

people out so that we could make the meal. At the last dinner party we had, everyone stayed in the kitchen enjoying drinks and appetizers while we cooked.”

While admitting a bit of construction fatigue (and lighter billfolds), the couple doesn’t plan to tackle another project for quite some time. Although they will likely remodel the upstairs bathroom at some point, they say that won’t be happening any time soon.

The key to a good remodel, Nathan says, is hiring good people. “Don’t hire an individual just on price,” he says. “Beyond doing your homework on the person you are hiring, you need to click with them. Remodeling is a lengthy process; you need to hire someone that you can communicate with, talk to, reason with, share feelings with, etc. Frank and John were wonderful to work with on this project. With every project you have ups and downs and they handled those well. They complimented us when they liked what they saw, and were not afraid to let us know if something wasn’t of their liking.”

From a design standpoint, Nathan’s best advice is to define your home and the way you live or, as he says, “listen to your home.” Look at the detail that is already there and emulate it throughout the project. “The house will tell you what to do and make the process so much easier,” he says. “Sometimes you don’t have to re-invent the wheel. Looking at the way you live is important; you don’t want to remodel a space the way the neighbor is remodeling just because it looks nice. You have the golden opportunity to put things where you will use them the most. You can design things to your needs. You can make things more accessible for your body type. Take advantage of this time and build a project that when you are done, you smile when you walk in the door.” ■

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ISLES STUDIO

Keeps It Natural

BY SHANE LUECK

Imagine stepping into a natural history museum where everything is for sale. Throughout the shop are plants, statuary, and beautiful containers for indoors and out. There are displays of quartz, amethyst, and fossils.

"We sell beautiful things from nature," says Jeff Bengtson, owner of Isles Studio. "I have always been obsessed with the natural world and our store aesthetic supports that. We sell real bugs, butterflies, and birds, all of

which are ethically sourced; all of our birds died of natural causes."

Isles Studio is the Minneapolis retail destination for natural history collectibles, artifacts, gifts, and garden and home decor. Bengtson curates a unique environment for exploring curiosities from the natural world and objects inspired by nature, offering the opportunity to enhance your home and garden with beautiful design or to find unique gifts for discerning individuals.

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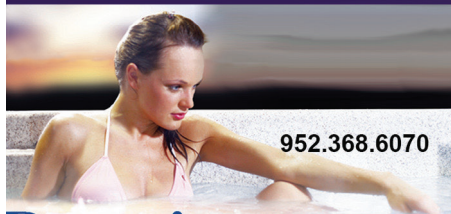
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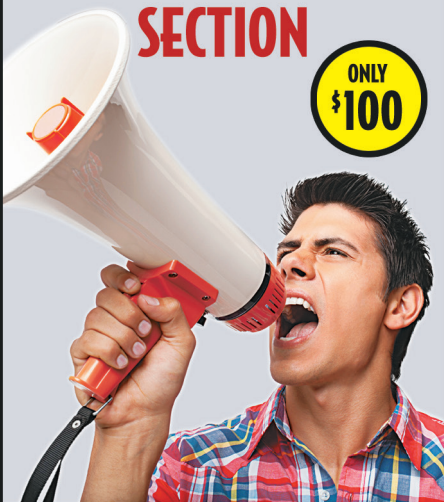
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Let's Talk



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Summer HOME & GARDEN

According to Bengtson, interior design has gotten too far away from the natural world. “It seems that good taste can be bought quickly online with very little thought or effort,” he says. “I think adding the unexpected of the natural world brings a refreshing and elegant beauty to a space.”

Isles Studio offers full interior design services, but can also help clients with smaller projects such as styling and staging if they are unsure of how to incorporate certain pieces into a particular space. Beyond that, all of the pieces are also available for rental if stylists are looking for something unusual to help complete a photo shoot, party, or special occasion. Have something to sell? Bengtson says they also buy natural history collections.

The good thing about nature, Bengtson says, is that it is timeless and doesn’t follow trends. Nature can be incorporated into any space, whether it is ultra-contemporary or very traditional; it works anywhere.

“Currently it seems that the use of natural history objects in decorating has become a trend,” he says. “You can find natural history reproductions of most anything now. Much of what we sell is available as a reproduction at many of the large national chain home furnishings retailers.”

With summer months ahead, Isles Studio’s focus for the next two or three months is to help customers complete their outdoor spaces. He says, “We have a garden boutique outside our shop which sells classic garden ornaments along with containers and tropical plants. We offer container design services and we also sell FERMOB, a French line of classic garden furniture.”

Whether looking for plants, furniture, or something a bit more unique, Bengtson and his staff are on-hand. “I think initially people are in awe at the beautiful taxidermy birds,” he says. “There are very few shops where you can walk in and find a giant Sarus crane, a crowned crane, a king penguin, flamingos, toucans, etc. and they are all for sale. Many customers gravitate toward the insects. The diversity that exists in the insect world is pretty incredible.”

Above all, Bengtson is focused on helping customers find the right piece for their space. He says, “We have many vendors and can usually find the right piece for everyone’s budget.”

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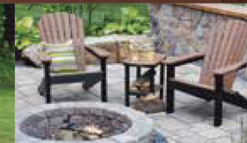
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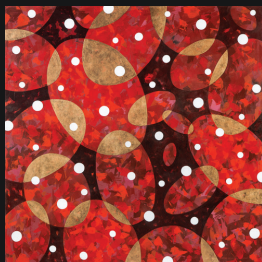
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ART-A-WHIRL'S COMMUNITY ARTISTS

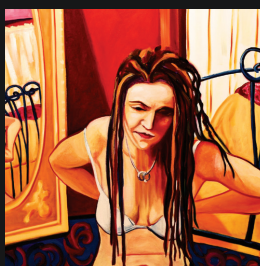
BY SHANE LUECK



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The days are longer and warmer, it's time to make your plans to get out and experience some of the best visual art our local scene has to offer as well as get to know some of the artists who identify as part of our community.

Presented by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA), Art-A-Whirl is an open studio tour in Northeast Minneapolis. It's a great opportunity to tour private artist studios and galleries, connect with the artists, and purchase original artwork. During Art-A-Whirl, private art studios, galleries, homes, storefronts, businesses, and restaurants have artwork on display and are open to the public, creating a fun atmosphere to connect with artists and purchase original artwork.

Over the last 20 years, it has become the largest open studio tour in the country. See the work of more than 600 artists in more than 20 mediums including clay, furniture, glass, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and much more. The artists' open studio tours may include demonstrations, live performances, and large-scale exhibitions. Studio tours offer a great opportunity to ask questions, discuss techniques, experience art first-hand, and purchase unique artwork directly from the artists for your home, garden, office, or self.

CALVIN DERUYTER (1)

www.CalsPortfolio.net

Though primarily known for his watercolor work, Calvin has worked in oil, oil and cold as medium, and acrylic mixed media as well as various sketch media. Graduating with a degree in fine art, Calvin ventured into the publishing business and didn't pick up a brush for 25 years. He says, "A friend pulled me back into art around 1999, telling me, 'It is time to get back to something you really loved.' I have been doing art ever since."

In Studio 321 in the Northrup King Building, Calvin will be offering a full range of work, both

framed and unframed. He will also have a couple boxes of nude sketches for sale that he calls "tack-y art" (because they are so cheap you don't have to be worried about just tacking them to a wall) in addition to close to 100 different designs of note cards created from originals.

As for what inspires his work, Calvin has no easy answer. "To narrow it down to a sentence or two: I paint a lot of landscapes," he says. "But I don't just want any landscape...I want to paint the feeling of that particular day, of that particular moment, the mood and emotion of that place."

JIM DRYDEN (2)

www.jimdryden.net

Working in acrylic on canvas or creating sculptures in aluminum, plywood, ebony, and sterling silver, Jim Dryden remembers it was at three years old when he thought all of the crayons in the box were like people who had feelings. "I believed that if I didn't use all of the colors equally some of their feelings would be hurt," he says. "I made some ugly pictures this way."

A deep love of modernism and an interest in math and science are the basis of Jim's inspiration. His most recent collection of paintings, "Set Theory," is inspired by Georg Cantor's mathematic set theory (think Venn diagrams) and uses patterns of overlapping circles to consider the idea of inclusivity/exclusivity and how we are all connected to one another in some way. "Gravity," Jim's current collection of sculptures, takes the two-dimensional shapes from his paintings and arranges them in three dimensions. The sculptures are made of individual parts that are not attached, and so they must stand by the force of balance and gravity.

"I'm not certain what Patrick Pryor, the gallery director, will select for this show, as all of the Kolman Pryor artists will be included in the Art-A-Whirl exhibition," Jim says, "but, I would

expect there will be examples of both my painting and sculpture."

CHRISTI FURNAS (3)

www.cfurnas.com

Christi Furnas began to consider herself an artist in high school. "It was a great escape from all the conformity and stress," she says. "It gave me an identity that was unique and something I could be proud of. I don't know if I would have made it through school without my art teachers. Art in the schools is so important because it helps kids deal with all the emotional crap that is happening around them."

Now Christi works in oil as well as pen and ink, and finds her wife to be the greatest inspiration. "She is not only inspiring but she is a huge support when I get down, or have a creative block," she shares. "She is a writer, so she understands that artists don't only work from inspiration, but from having discipline. I am certainly not inspired every time I sit down and write, draw, or paint. I would get nothing done! She helps me get off my butt and go to the studio."

That studio is Steadfast Studio and Gallery in the Solar Arts Building, where Christi's work will be on display during Art-A-Whirl. "I am currently working on a graphic novel; I'm still in the early stages," Christi says. "I just received an Artist Initiative Grant through the Minnesota State Arts Board to start the project, so people will primarily see illustrations of possible characters from the future book. I will have a range of sizes, some framed and some not. I will also have a couple of examples of my oil paintings, which are much different."

MIKE WELTON (4)

www.mikeweltonart.com

Growing up, Mike Welton's dad would take him to new building developments since he was in the real estate development business and the idea and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47 ➔

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2016 Chevrolet Malibu



Let's talk about *that* commercial for a moment.

There is an advert running on television and social media for which a group of "real" people are led to a courtyard to see a white debadged mid-sized sedan pull up. It is certainly sleek and sexy, well proportioned and attractive. The group of men and women encircle the car to say that this mystery sedan was either a "BMW" or an "Audi." To their surprise, it turns out that it is the 2016 Chevrolet Malibu.

On one hand, it is a very curious commercial. It is audacious in its delivery for having "real" people think that a car that was clearly not designed in Europe could be considered something that originated from that continent. Yet, you have been talking about this commercial. You have mocked it. It was an entry toward a longer discussion about this vehicle.

There is an upside to this commercial. Because of it (or in spite of it) Malibu sales are up. This sedan is now the second-best selling nameplate at any given Chevrolet dealership across North America since the beginning of calendar year 2016. Not because it looks like a BMW or an Audi. There is much more to it.

When I received this new sedan in review, I got a lot of flack from you. You went on to mock it for being a BMW or an Audi. You knew darn well that this is a Chevrolet, because you saw that commercial. Fine. I took your ribbing like a good openly gay automotive writer and proceeded to take the Malibu through its paces.

Let me indulge your mockery by giving you my thoughts on the new 2016 Chevrolet Malibu.

Chevrolet design has been transformed with sharper, more cutting edge lines that make each model sleeker, but more practical than before. The Malibu went a bit further with a lower silhouette, a wider front end leading to a more tapered rear. The overlook is far from European by any means. Some might say that the Malibu took its influences from Asia, where they conceive and execute sleeker mid-sized sedans with sharper edges than anywhere else.

The wide-mouth lower grille greets you, framed by a sleek upper grille and headlamp units. The low lines rise gradually to envelop an equally sleeker fastback-like roof. A three-glass side greenhouse fits perfectly for the new image Chevrolet wanted for the Malibu. This leads to a sculpted rear end, one could easily mistake this for one of its competitors. No worries, the bow tie is there to let you know that it is indeed a Malibu.

On our 1LT tester, the Malibu came with 17-inch wheels that are handsome. If you select higher trim levels, the wheels become larger, nothing more than 18 inches. Still, the package is handsome and, yes, distinctive enough to pick out in a lot. This is an absolute testament of what the retiring vice president of design at General Motors, Ed Welburn, wanted for not only Chevrolet, but for the most mainstream car in its lineup.

The reason why I mentioned Mr. Welburn is because he is a pioneer at General Motors, first working in the Buick studios as the first African American designer at GM. After 44 years of rising to the top of his game by applying his pen, sculpting tools, and his signature to sign off on the latest looks from GM, Welburn will leave a legacy behind for all of us to enjoy for decades to come. I know I will miss seeing Mr. Welburn in action on any given auto show floor.

In continuing to pay tribute to Mr. Welburn, the Malibu's cabin offers the latest in GM design. The cowl is low, but it offers an informative setup within the instrument binnacle. Two large dials give way to a customizable central TFT screen where every bit of data can be gleaned in a clean format. The new steering wheel offers a set of switches that control the center screen, cruise control, and add two sets of audio controls on the back of the spokes. Other switches are made cleaner to operate on the stalks, as well as other controls below the instrument panel's beltline.

The center stack offers a new design for Chevrolet. It may appear to be a small tablet-like screen, but it is still attached to the rest of the instrument panel. This is where MyLink resides; Chevrolet's infotainment suite that includes various functions, from climate control to radio broadcast to OnStar's 4G LTE Wi-Fi connectivity. This screen also plays as the control for two new connected technologies, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Using an Android phone, integration looks seamless, as long as you connect via the USB port. It emulates Google Maps perfectly, which makes for a great replacement for an on-screen navigation system; or, at least for one not equipped with such.

Our 1LT tester had cloth seating that offers decent comfort and bolstering for its front occupants. Front space is quite good while seating offers some bolstering and support to all kinds of drivers. Rear seat comfort is also quite decent with improved leg room from the last generation. Headroom may be challenged due to the slope of the roofline. Trunk room is very spacious: 15.8 cubic feet that does a good job in taking on an extended weekend full of luggage for all five passengers.

Power has been changed to an all-turbocharged lineup. This 1LT tester had the smaller 1.5-liter version of the turbo Ecotec four-cylinder, with 160 horsepower on tap. It certainly does not feel like a 160-horsepower engine, since it offers smooth takeoff with nominal turbo lag. It certainly feels its 184 pound-feet of torque, a welcomed figure to help pull about 3,126 pounds of mid-sized sedan. This engine was channeled through a six-speed automatic transmission sending power to its front wheels. In terms of fuel economy, the efficient turbo engine turned an average of 31.1 MPG.

Ride quality was competent. It was not as smooth as we wished, even when trying to absorb not-so-great road surfaces in its wake. Handling is on the soft side, but controlled through the corners. Steering was also

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fine, trending toward the numb side for true road feel; yet, it did exhibit a good turning radius to get out of tight situations. Braking was very good, showing great pedal feel and solid stops in normal and panic situations.

Available active safety is also a good selling point for the new Malibu. This 1LT came with the Driver Confidence Package, which includes Front and Rear Park Assist, Forward Collision Alert, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Lane Keep Assist, Front Automatic Braking, Side Blind Zone Alert, and Front Pedestrian Detection. All of these systems work quite well in this Malibu.

The starting point of the new Malibu lineup is an L sedan with a base price of \$21,625. This 1LT tester came with a sticker price of \$27,985, a solid middle-of-the-road value with popular equipment included. For

2016, the Malibu can be ordered as a Hybrid, using a 1.8-liter gasoline engine with a two-mode electric driveline. With the promise of achieving up to 47 MPG in the city, a Malibu Hybrid is priced from \$27,770.

Even with the complimentary reactions by the “real” people in *that* commercial, it seems that Chevrolet has created the best Malibu in a very long time. It matches with the needs and wants of mid-sized sedan customers for today with an edge toward tomorrow. There are plenty of competitors that do not offer the content that the Malibu has now, a huge nod to the advances Chevrolet and General Motors are making in this segment.

Yet, one thing must be addressed immediately. There is no mistaking what this sedan really is: a Chevrolet. And, that is a good thing these days. ■



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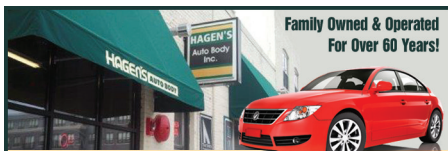
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

interest of buildings took hold at a young age. "I took painting class five times in high school and I'm not sure how I got away with that, but I knew I enjoyed it and was good at it," he says. "After a desire to escape the digital detail required for graphic design, I started painting every day 19 years ago; after a year I had my first solo show that sold out."

Using sharpie pens and plenty of oil mediums in his newer paintings, Mike's graphic design experience influenced his painting in terms of attention to design and details of the image. "My visual attention is caught by letter forms and angular geometric shapes that architecture has along with signage," he says. "My most popular works are paintings I started painting 10 years ago of iconic Twin Cities signs and buildings."

Fans of his work can catch him in Studio 367 in the Northrup King Building during the event.

MEG BROWN (5)

www.etsy.com/shop/megbrownceramics

As an artist in one form or another since their teenage years, Meg Brown began as a photographer before spending the majority of their mid-20s and 30s as a painter, until 2011 when Meg's dad passed away. "I basically quit art, and lost all direction," Meg says. "That 'break' from art was more of a struggle than a break, and I started playing with clay to keep my hands busy. I took a couple classes at Northern Clay Center and I was hooked! By fall of 2013 I set up shop with a couple of other artist friends, and set out to create functional art."

Nearly three years later and Meg is still working with B-clay (a porcelain/white clay mix). It's freedom that inspires them most. "Nine-to-five jobs never really worked for me, I am much happier and productive when I create my own schedule and making art is just that," they say. "I usually don't say no to an opportunity to make art, whether it's a medium that I know well, or something that I'm learning for the first time. I recently made a short documentary (my first of many films), *Raising Owen: A Genderqueer Love Story*, which provides a short look into the lives of a Minneapolis family navigating non-binary parenting. I love art and I try to make art for everybody, but I specifically focus on queer/trans folks and sex-positive work."

Meg has been working non-stop since January to beef up their stock and get ready for Art-a-Whirl visitors in Studio 451 in the Northrup King Building. "I love this event because it's a chance for folks to see where we create," Meg says. "It gives a sense of magic and really enables me to connect with folks that I don't get at other art shows. I'll have tons of queer and kinky mugs as well as my hand-built flasks and drink tumblers." ■

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Old Yeller

There are a lot of benefits to being a lesbian.

- No one cares what type of shoes you wear.
- It's perfectly acceptable to cut your own hair.
- Cats (no further explanation needed).
- You get to kiss other women.

But it wasn't until just yesterday that I realized the skill sets I've learned by being a lesbian would benefit my career.

About three years ago, I started a job in an organization that is dominated by women. This was a sea change for me given that I was coming from corporate America, which is run largely by men.

Anything I write about the differences between women versus men in the workplace will just get me in trouble, and result in me having to figure out how to log into Twitter to read nasty messages from both sexes aimed at my ignorance, overgeneralization, and stupidity.

And, honestly, I've had a stressful week and have the emotional wherewithal to take on only half the population at present. So, let's focus on what are two of the best things about working in a female-dominated organization:

1. Top on the list is food. There is always food. And it's usually homemade and with a very high fat content. Because of number two below, there is a ready supply of baked goods when you need to eat your feelings.

2. It's OK to cry. No one freaks out when you do. Women recognize the difference between stress crying and having a breakdown. It's perfectly acceptable to weep during a meeting. We will recognize that the tears are most likely the result of a combination of factors that hit you at once (e.g., your kids are acting up, you missed a deadline, your aging parent is failing, and, yes, you may be at a particularly excitable stage of your cycle).

Warning: Women all accept the role monthly hormonal surges play in our moods. And it's perfectly acceptable to reference it when explaining emotional fragility, though we generally do so only to other women, because we all understand that this is not a weakness or form of temporary insanity. Men, this is dangerous territory and I advise you to never, ever raise the issue. Even if you think you are being helpful, you are not.

No woman will think that crying at the office is a reflection on your ability to perform your job or your professionalism. We'll bring you a donut, comfort you with funny stories of when we've cried at work, and then we'll get back to business.

One of the biggest challenges I've faced since working in a mostly female environment, though, is the extremes people will go to to avoid:

1. Yelling at a woman; or
2. Getting yelled at by a woman.

Recently, there was a situation that called for confronting a staff member over a misguided project strategy. No one wanted to do it because this staff member, though widely respected, was known to use yelling as her first defense. If you could get past that, she was very reasonable and easy to work with. But everyone was scared to venture into the lion's den. Everyone, that is, except me. Why? Because I'm a lesbian.

After over an hour locked in her office, the walls rattling like angry tea kettles as we stood toe-to-toe screaming at each other, we settled down, sorted out a solution and happily rolled out a new project plan to staff.

A few of my colleagues cornered me afterward and asked me how I did it. "I'm a 51-year-old lesbian," I said. "And I have a very long history of being yelled at by women. And the way to respond is to yell right back at them. It's not scary. It's therapeutic. It doesn't end a relationship. It starts a conversation. Now let's go eat some cake." ■



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